

Meir Overheard

FBI Reportedly Bugged Envoys

Washington

The FBI has had wiretaps on the Israeli and Chilean embassies here, and has overheard a conversation involving Premier Golda Meir, U.S. intelligence sources said yesterday.

The wiretap program was known by the code name "Scope," the officials said,

and was initiated during the Johnson administration.

"I remember that the reports were hand-carried around because of the political sensitivity of our bugging an ally," one source said.

He specifically recalled reading the transcript of a conversation involving Mrs. Meir, the Israeli premier, and Lieutenant General Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's ambassador to the U.S. during the Middle East crisis of 1970.

"Mrs. Meir was discussing Secretary of State (William P.) Rogers," the source recalled.

At the time, the U.S. was seeking a peace agreement in the Middle East.

Copies of the "Scope" material were routinely distributed by the FBI to the offices of Henry A. Kissinger, President Nixon's national security adviser, and to the Central Intelligence Agency and National Security Agency, the intelligence official said.

He added that intelligence officers in the government only saw material relating to foreign affairs.

The U.S. has never acknowledged wiretapping the Israel Embassy or the embassy of any other foreign government, although such activities are known to be conducted and have been reported in the past.

The wiretapping was revealed in connection with the Watergate affair in which the sources said yesterday that James W. McCord Jr. had made calls to the two embassies in an attempt to force the government to concede that he'd been overheard and so dismiss the charges of burglary and conspiracy against him. The sources said that McCord had known the embassies were wiretapped from his days as a CIA official. *N.Y. Times Service*